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Chair: Mr. Diallo (Senegal)
later: Ms. Brown (Vice-Chair) (Jamaica)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 19: Sustainable development ([A/68/79-E/2013/69](#), [A/68/258](#), [A/68/278](#), [A/68/308](#), [A/68/309](#), [A/68/383](#), [A/68/544](#), [A/C.2/68/3](#) and [A/C.2/68/5](#))

- (a) **Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development** ([A/68/310](#), [A/68/321](#) and [A/68/322](#))
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- (j) **The role of the international community in the prevention of the radiation threat in Central Asia** ([A/68/143/Rev.1](#))

1. **Ms. Wahlström** (Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction ([A/68/320](#)), said that it provided an overview of progress made over the previous 12 months in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, in response to General Assembly resolution [67/209](#). While lives had been saved by investments to reduce existing disaster risk, bolder action was needed

to address the further accumulation of risk and ensure the resilience and sustainability of populations. National, regional and global consultations on a successor framework to the Hyogo Framework for Action had revealed a widespread understanding of the importance of disaster risk reduction for sustainable development and meeting the challenges of climate change. They had also highlighted the need to underpin the next framework with a commitment to addressing the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable groups. The International Law Commission was making a valuable normative contribution to the development of such a framework. On the ground, further work was needed to gather more data and learn from national experiences; around the world, 60 countries were already collecting disaster-related data: it was hoped that they would be joined by a further 30 within a year and that the number would continue to grow. Japan, which had offered to host the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in early 2015, was particularly keen to share the lessons it had learned from the 2011 tsunami and earthquake in the region.

2. **Ms. Figueres** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), speaking via video link from Bonn, introduced her report on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Doha in 2012 ([A/68/260](#), section I). The major political advances made on that occasion, although not sufficient to limit the rise in average global temperatures to below 2°C, counted as crucial steps towards reaching a global climate agreement by 2015. The second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol had been extended for a further eight years, to 2020, with 37 countries thereby committed to emission reduction targets 18 per cent below their 1990 baselines. A further negotiating track that had been closed in Doha concerned the implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change through long-term cooperative action. The Parties had also decided to make institutional arrangements to provide developing countries with financial and technical support and to work together towards a new agreement that would be adopted in 2015 and come into force in 2020. In addition, industrialized countries had reiterated their commitment to mobilize \$100 billion annually for adaptation and mitigation.

3. The Parties had made significant progress in several other areas, detailed in the report. Particularly

noteworthy was the establishment of a Green Climate Fund, expected to move to its permanent home in Songdo, Republic of Korea, very shortly and to be ready for initial capitalization in early 2014. The next Climate Change Conference would focus on a new global agreement, climate finance and the establishment of an international mechanism to address loss and damage resulting from the impacts of climate change.

4. **Ms. Barbut** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa), introducing her report (A/68/260, section II) via a video message, said that the decision of the General Assembly at its 67th session to include desertification, land degradation and drought in the post-2015 development agenda had given significant impetus to discussion of those issues. They were global challenges that created difficulties for the sustainable development of all countries, especially the poorest. If the international community did not take radical steps to address those challenges, all its other commitments, including on climate change and biodiversity, poverty eradication and food security, would be jeopardized. Inclusive sustainable development demanded the inclusion of sustainable land management as an integral part of national development policies. All too few countries had invested in national programmes of action for the rehabilitation of degraded land and the preservation of fragile ecosystems subject to frequent drought. When suitable policies were strictly applied, there were within a few years improvements in people's living conditions and also greater resilience to climate change.

5. The results of the meetings of the subsidiary organs of the Convention to Combat Desertification took largely into account the Rio+20 outcome document as it related to the issues under consideration. The deliberations of those meetings were summarized in the report, which also proposed a number of actions for approval by the General Assembly. Since the writing of the report, the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties had been held in Windhoek, Namibia — the first since Rio+20. Among its many substantive achievements, it had reached a consensus on a large number of decisions aimed at strengthening implementation of the Convention on the ground. It had decided to set up an intergovernmental group to follow up on the relevant outcomes of Rio+20, which

would report to it at its next session, and it had closed the debate on institutional arrangements by deciding to co-locate the Global Mechanism of the Convention with the secretariat in Bonn. She and the secretariat would continue, with the support of the General Assembly, to work with decision-makers in all countries to make an even more notable contribution to improving the living conditions of the populations concerned.

6. **Mr. Dias** (Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing his report (A/68/260, section III), said that it covered in detail the outcomes of the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The report also provided an assessment of progress made in relation to 20 time-bound targets, included in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and intended to be implemented primarily through national biodiversity strategies and action plans and associated national targets. A comprehensive assessment was under preparation and would be reflected in the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, to be issued in late 2014. The secretariat of the Convention had promoted a number of activities to encourage conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and had been regularly giving its support to the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. The twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties would be held in the Republic of Korea in 2014, on the theme of "Biodiversity for sustainable development".

7. **Mr. Seth** (Director, Division for Sustainable Development), introduced nine reports of the Secretary-General. The first (A/68/321) was on the implementation of Agenda 21, Rio +20 and other United Nations conferences on sustainable development. The second (A/68/310) dealt with options for facilitating the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies and contained a number of recommendations by the Secretary-General, including for the holding of regular dialogues within the United Nations system on assessments of technology needs of developing countries and on how best to meet them. The third report (A/68/308) concerned agricultural technology for development and elaborated on the key role played by such technology in freeing humanity from poverty and hunger. The United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All was the subject of the fourth report (A/68/309), which was providing an

opportunity for the development of a coordinated global plan of action to promote complementarity and synergies. The fifth report (A/68/719) addressed the issue of the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system and explained how their more systematic integration would allow the system to better support Member States in implementing the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals. The sixth report (A/68/322), on intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations, showed how that issue was embedded in the concept of sustainable development and in existing treaties, declarations, resolutions and intergovernmental decisions and outlined possible models to institutionalize concern for future generations within the United Nations. The seventh report (A/68/316) was dedicated to the follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. It gave examples of initiatives already taken and summarized the preparations for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Samoa in September 2014; the Committee was called on to consider further the modalities of the Conference. Harmony with Nature was the subject of the eighth report (A/68/325), which was aimed at strengthening the ethical basis for the relationship between humanity and the Earth. The ninth report (A/68/258) concerned cooperative measures to assess and increase awareness of environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea. Finally, he introduced a report prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on sustainable mountain development (A/68/307), which put forward recommendations on the continued promotion of development in the mountain regions around the world.

8. **Mr. Harris** (Director, New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)), introducing the report of the UNEP Governing Council on its first universal session, said that, in its paragraph 88, the Rio+20 outcome document had called, in particular, for the strengthening of UNEP, in particular through universal membership of its Governing Council. The session had been a great success and had been attended by 146 Member States and the leading stakeholders. Ministerial consultations on that occasion had been devoted to policy issues and had highlighted

the need for increased financial resources in order for UNEP to be able to follow up fully on the outcome document and contribute more effectively to the fulfilment of sustainable development goals. He drew attention to the second of the 14 decisions adopted at the end of the session, which provided for a number of important institutional measures.

9. He then introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/68/544), which provided updates on progress made to give effect to the successive resolutions adopted by the General Assembly concerning the environmental disaster caused in 2006 by the destruction of oil storage tanks near the Jiyeh power plant in Lebanon.

10. **Mr. Rahman** (World Tourism Organization), introducing the report on sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central America (A/68/278), said that it showed how the seven member States of the Central American Integration System used their strategic planning for tourism development to advance sustainable tourism and sustainable development and highlighted the lessons to be drawn from their experience by other countries and regions.

11. **Mr. Daunivalu** (Fiji), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was vital for all Member States to promote sustainable development in accordance with the Rio Principles, first and foremost the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The Group welcomed the establishment of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and also the Secretary-General's recommendations regarding the establishment of a technology facilitation mechanism. Developing countries could not switch to a more sustainable development path without the appropriate technology; it was essential to bridge the technological divide in order to promote sustainable industrialization and inclusive growth across the world.

12. The Group noted with concern that much more needed to be done to address the vulnerabilities of small island developing States and called on the international community to honour its commitments to their sustainable development, as set out in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. The Group was also concerned about the increasing severity of the impacts of natural disasters and remained committed to the cause of disaster risk reduction. It attached great importance to the Third

World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in 2015; the conference should be prepared in a transparent and open way and should involve not only Governments but also other stakeholders and civil society.

13. Climate change was one of the greatest global challenges, threatening not only the development prospects of developing countries but also, in some cases, their very survival. Climate change negotiations must therefore be pursued with a sense of urgency. While some progress had been made at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Climate Change, the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol lacked ambition. The Group hoped that would be remedied in 2014. It called on developed countries to fulfil their commitments under the Convention and, accordingly, to ensure the full operationalization of the Green Climate Fund by 2014.

14. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification remained an important tool for achieving food security, eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable land use. Those issues must be incorporated in the post-2015 development agenda. The Group reiterated the call for adequate and predictable financial resources to address the effects of desertification and supported the establishment of an intergovernmental scientific panel on desertification, land degradation and drought. It also recognized the important role played by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and welcomed the action taken to promote access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their utilization; however, more work needed to be done in that direction. The Group likewise welcomed the outcomes of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties and hoped that a final target for resource mobilization would be adopted at the twelfth meeting. Turning lastly to the report of the UNEP Governing Council, he said that, while UNEP had an important role in regard to the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, it was even more important for partners to provide the necessary resources for its implementation.

15. *Ms. Brown (Jamaica), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

16. **Ms. Riley** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), warned against the catastrophic consequences of climate change in the

absence of immediate action. CARICOM looked to the upcoming Warsaw Climate Change Conference to ensure that the world was on track in 2020 to meet the below 2° global goal for temperature increase. It must, in particular, establish an international mechanism to address loss and damage from climate change impacts; secure a clear commitment from developed countries to achieve the \$100 billion-by-2020 target; and make meaningful progress towards closing the pre-2020 mitigation ambition gap. CARICOM also expected the 2014 Climate Summit to play a valuable role in catalyzing action on climate change ahead of the conclusion of a global climate agreement in 2015.

17. CARICOM welcomed the leadership role to be played by the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which would complement the functions of other United Nations bodies in that area. Sustainable development goals must build on the experience of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to ensure focused and coherent action. CARICOM was encouraged by the work done thus far by the Open Working Group and would continue to advocate for the incorporation of the concerns of small island developing States in that emerging global framework. The 2014 International Conference on Small Island Developing States would be a pivotal moment in that process and merited the support of the international community, including through contributions to the trust fund set up for the purpose.

18. **Mr. Bame** (Ethiopia), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that Rio+20 had been a major turning point in international development cooperation and provided a platform for the crafting of a post-2015 development agenda based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Poverty eradication remained the greatest global challenge, particularly in Africa, and was a precondition for sustainable development. It was therefore all the more necessary for international partners to fulfil all their commitments to supporting Africa. The High-Level Political Forum should provide leadership and ensure the cohesion and complementarity of the various Rio+20 follow-up processes while promoting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. It also had a critical responsibility for ensuring that the sustainable development goals formulated by the Open Working Group were related to the outcome of the work of the Intergovernmental

Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing.

19. Climate change continued to pose a serious threat to African and other developing countries. It was therefore a matter of urgency that a legally binding agreement be reached by 2015 and that developed countries fulfil their commitment to mobilize \$100 billion for the Green Climate Fund by 2020. African countries could not adapt to climate change or mitigate its effects without practising sustainable land management; that made it all the more critical to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification by providing support for projects to combat desertification in developing countries. The African Group also attached crucial importance to the exploration of options for facilitating the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies through a technology facilitation mechanism: technology was the key to the industrialization and structural transformation of developing economies.

20. **Mr. Sidehabi** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), expressed support for the Rio+20 follow-up processes and for efforts to establish a technology facilitation mechanism. The High-Level Political Forum had rightly emphasized that poverty eradication together with sustainable development were the core objectives of the post-2015 development agenda; it needed to maintain a focused approach so as itself to generate momentum for change. While it was important to address the challenges of sustainable development, including desertification, land degradation, drought and continued biodiversity loss, efforts must also be stepped up for the timely achievement of the MDGs; given the global increase in disaster risk, that would require a risk-sensitive approach, notably in the ASEAN region.

21. ASEAN was taking concrete steps to address the adverse impacts of climate change, which was one of the greatest global challenges of the present time. It fervently hoped for a successful outcome to the Warsaw Climate Conference, which must be comprehensive, balanced and driven by Member States and take into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Similarly, the deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda must be open, transparent, inclusive and driven by Member States.

22. **Mr. Beviglia Zampetti** (Observer for the European Union) speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and in addition, Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, stressed the importance of policy coherence within the United Nations system, not only among the Rio +20 follow-up processes, the post-2015 development agenda and the financing for development process, but also with many other associated concerns, including democracy, rule of law, human rights, peace and security, gender equality, empowerment of women, population and development and climate change. Climate change was a central challenge and needed to be met through low-emission, climate-resilient development and the use of climate action as a catalyst for sustainable development. The Warsaw Climate Conference should pave the way for the adoption of a legally binding agreement and concrete measures to limit the increase in global temperature to less than 2° above pre-industrial levels. He also looked forward to constructive discussions on biological diversity, desertification, land degradation and drought, and disaster risk reduction and to the convening of the Third United Nations Conference on Small Island Developing States, which should be focused, effective and action-oriented, as should its preparatory process. The European Union would be a natural partner of those States in their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

23. Because of continuing, rapid urbanization, there could be no sustainable development without the involvement of cities or without a holistic approach to development. Discussions on the preparation of the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development should therefore be inclusive and effective and focus on the challenges of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. It was also hoped that efforts would continue to be made to improve the working methods of the Committee, as part of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

24. **Ms. Moses** (Nauru), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that the upcoming Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States was expected to usher in a new era of sustainable development partnerships underpinned by mutual trust, equality, respect and accountability.

Climate change was the defining challenge of the present generation and an existential threat to countries like her own, where its increasingly severe impacts further exacerbated the challenges of poverty, ecological degradation and sustainable development. The international community would soon have a number of important opportunities, including the Samoa Conference and the Warsaw Conference on Climate Change, to take the necessary bold action.

25. The sustainable management of marine resources was of key importance for small island developing States in order to ensure their competitive advantage in the global economy and essential for them to deliver on the three pillars of sustainable development. The sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda should duly reflect that fact. As those States also had vast renewable energy resources that could allow them both to meet their own needs and export to other countries, the prioritization of renewable energy would enable them to play their part in global efforts for climate change mitigation and adaptation. She looked to the High-Level Political Forum to give appropriate attention to their priorities. The Alliance of Small Island States was convinced that enhanced international cooperation and symmetrical partnership could ease the path to more universally beneficial and more equitable sustainable development. It urged development partners to continue to make voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the Samoa Conference and to join in observing the 2014 International Year of Small Island Developing States.

26. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the sustainability of development depended on the balanced integration of its economic, social and environmental dimensions, as spelled out in the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. The Group welcomed the fact that the High-Level Political Forum would follow up on the implementation of that Programme of Action and it recognized the need to take the fullest possible account of sustainable development goals. The Group had reaffirmed its commitment to implementing the Programme of Action, which would be reviewed periodically with all the main stakeholders and other interested parties. The least developed countries continued to suffer from the adverse effects of the current crises, which had kept their annual economic growth rate far below the 7 per cent target; timely

international assistance was therefore needed to back up their efforts. The continuing decline in ODA was of deep concern to them as ODA was their main source of external financing.

27. The priorities of least developed countries needed to be placed at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda, which must take up the MDGs and provide a framework for the implementation of sustainable development strategies and policies with a view to the total eradication of poverty worldwide.

28. **Mr. Ruiz Hernández** (Panama), speaking on behalf of the Central American Integration System (SICA), said that sustainable development was a top priority nationally and regionally and that the SICA countries were making every effort to promote it jointly, with due regard for its three economic, social and environmental dimensions. The gradual improvements in the quality of life thereby brought about entailed economic growth and changes in methods of production and patterns of consumption. Sustainable development must also be based on respect for regional, national and local cultural and ethnic diversity and fuller citizen participation in a context of peaceful coexistence and harmony with nature. It required the full participation of the private sector and civil society, technology transfer and dissemination, skills promotion and capacity-building. Multilateralism remained the best approach to the global challenges involved.

29. The Central American region possessed rich cultural and natural resources and great biodiversity of incalculable value to the planet. Nevertheless, poverty levels were generally high and the threat of extreme natural events was increasingly present owing to the adverse effects of climate change. The SICA countries therefore placed great hope on the outcome of the intergovernmental decisions taken in the follow-up to Rio+20, particularly within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda. For their part, they had prepared a draft resolution on sustainable tourism, as in the previous year, which they hoped would again be supported; sustainable tourism was a key element in their integrated strategies for eradicating poverty and could make an important contribution to such efforts at national, regional and global levels.

30. **Ms. Alforgani** (Libya) welcomed the establishment of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which could be expected to

show leadership in filling the gaps in the development agenda. The efforts of developing countries to achieve sustainable development and thereby rescue their peoples from the grip of poverty and disease, promote women, raise educational levels and build human resources were being hampered by a number of factors, including the adverse effects of climate change, which was one of the greatest global challenges of the present era; it required a collective effort by the international community based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The non-sustainable use of biodiversity was a further factor impeding development; the only way to address it was through capacity-building and a strengthening of human and financial resources. The promotion of biodiversity needed therefore to be included in the post-2015 development agenda. Measures to address disaster risk must also be included, as disasters threatened the way of life and very survival of millions of people. Greater international coordination was called for, together with the establishment of an early warning system as part of a general strategy to reduce disaster risk at national and international levels.

31. Many countries were continuing to battle poverty, especially those affected by desertification. While welcoming the positive outcome of the eleventh Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, Libya urged the international community to provide the secretariat of the Convention with the necessary financial and technical support to do its work and limit the impacts of desertification on developing countries. Increased political support for the promotion of alternative energy sources and low-emission technologies was also needed, as lack of access to clean and renewable energy was a major obstacle to development for many countries.

32. **Mr. Elkaraksy** (Egypt) said that poverty eradication was the greatest challenge currently facing the world and a precondition for sustainable development. In the current unfavourable international economic environment, the continuing decline in ODA was worrying. The right to development and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should remain the bedrock of global development efforts.

33. Egypt welcomed the establishment of the High-Level Political Forum and the proposals concerning the creation of a technology facilitation mechanism but it remained concerned about the lack of collective action to respond to climate change. Developed countries must fulfil their commitments, particularly in view of

their historical responsibilities; in addition, they should make robust mitigation commitments, with ambitious emissions reduction targets.

34. Water was also crucial for sustainable development, and its proper management was essential. The international community must therefore agree on a goal of water security and promote benefit sharing, along with the “no harm” principle; other goals could include reduction of the number of people facing water poverty and the number of countries facing water stress. Priority should also be given to energy production, in particular through the establishment, as a matter of urgency, of a mechanism for the transfer of advanced energy technologies, and to scaling up of international efforts to combat land degradation, drought and desertification.

35. **Mr. Loh Seck Tiong** (Malaysia) said that it was important to ensure synergy, coherence and mutual support among the various Rio+20 follow-up processes and to shape the functions of the High-Level Political Forum so that it would be able to monitor and implement sustainable development commitments, in particular after 2015. Malaysia’s own commitment to sustainable development had been articulated through its national development plans, aimed at the achievement of developed-nation status by 2020. His country also expected to shift to a low-carbon economy and was committed to a 40 per cent voluntary emission reduction target by that same year.

36. It had adopted a successful green technology policy which had brought substantial foreign direct investments to Malaysia’s solar photovoltaic industry and was encouraging the business sector to invest in environmental protection. Financial assistance and fiscal incentives had been made available to promote the use and development of green technology, while greater emphasis had been placed on sustainable consumption and production and the adoption of sustainable practices in palm oil cultivation. Malaysia was committed to keeping at least 50 per cent of its land as forest cover. Moreover, its achievements in pursuit of sustainable development were reflected in successes at the social level, including a drop in the country’s overall poverty rate and an increase in average household income. The Committee could therefore rest assured of his delegation’s full support for the Rio+20 intergovernmental processes and other processes relevant to the post-2015 development agenda.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.